



UPDATE

Spring 2000

Vol. 3 No. 2

Update, the newsletter of the African Burial Ground Project, is published by the Office of Public Education and Interpretation of the African Burial Ground (OPEI), at 6 World Trade Ctr., U.S. Custom House, Rm. 239, New York, NY 10048. Tel. (212) 432-5707, Fax (212) 432-5920. Please send all e-mail inquiries to nyabg@worldnet.att.net. *Update* provides current information about New York City's African Burial Ground and its historical context. This publication is made possible with funds provided by the U.S. General Services Administration under contract number 2PCB-CM-97-0154.

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and more!

Remembering and Honoring Our Ancestors

Donna Harden-Cole

“When the first ancestral remains were unearthed from the African Burial Ground in May 1991, we had no idea what this would mean for rewriting New York City’s history. An African historical presence was not widely taught nor discussed. The contributions of Africans to the making of New York as laborers, enslaved and free was depicted in few history books. Many New Yorkers still do not know that African enslavement in New York City is as much apart of the city’s history as Ellis Island. I believe that we honor our ancestors by learning as much as we can about them, about their trials and accomplishments despite tremendous adversity. We honor our ancestors by continuing to learn and by teaching our children...” states Office of Public Education and Interpretation’s Director Sherrill D. Wilson, in celebration of the Eighth Annual OPEI Open House Event.

The Eighth Annual Office of Public Education and Interpretation’s Open House was held on Saturday May 20 , 2000 at 6 World Trade Center. This year’s theme for the organization that has served as the mouthpiece for the project is **Remembering and Honoring Our Ancestors**. Public project updates including accomplishments and obstacles were delivered by Dr. Michael L. Blakey (Project and Scientific Director), Dr. Warren Perry (Associate Director of Archaeology), Dr. Sherrill D. Wilson (OPEI Director), Peggy King-Jorde (Memorialization Executive), and GSA representative Ronald Law. Long time project supporter and spiritual leader Chief Alegba Egunfemi Afegbolola was recognized for his dedication and commitment to the ancestors of the African Burial Ground. Ayo Harrington (Friends of the African Burial Ground) also advised the community, the public and the *Update* readership to remain vigilant in its support of the recognition of the ancestors of the New York African Burial Ground.

“In our society we talk a lot about slaves. *These were enslaved persons*. Prior to coming here they we doctors, teachers, mediators, parents. They had occupations, skills. They had character.” - Claudine Brown, from the documentary film *The African Burial Ground: An American Discovery (Part 3 / 1993)*.

→→→ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR →→→

A Vote of Confidence from the U.N.

I would like to thank you for your participation in the U. S. Mission's program honoring Black History Month. As a native New Yorker, I find the history of this city fascinating and the African Burial Ground Project important and worthy of great attention. The Office of Public Education and Interpretation has done a tremendous job in turning an otherwise unseemly period in American History into an opportunity to honor the memory, legacy and contributions of Africans brought to this country against their will. I am pleased that you were willing to bring this invaluable history lesson to our Mission and the UN community.

Thank you, once again for coming to the U.S. Mission to share your insights in an ongoing effort to strengthen our community and our world.

Richard Holbroke, Representative of the
United States of America to the U.N.

Comments on Reburial

According to the Howard University Update article, reburial is to take place by December 2000. I would hope that there would be no pressure to rebury our ancestors during inclement weather. I think it would be a mistake to schedule such an auspicious occasion during a month that we could possibly have very cold weather or deep snow. If the reburial must take place in 2001, so be it. This is a once in a lifetime experience that I am looking forward to witnessing. I think everyone would like it to be a tremendous success. Please give the weather priority when considering the reburial date.

Margaret R. Smith

Teachers and Students Speak Out

Thank you so much for the wonderful tour you gave us recently. As you can see, you really touched my students in a special way. Hope to see you next year when I bring another class!

Lynda Castagliola,
The Bedford Village School, Bklyn., NY

I would like to thank you for the wonderful tour you gave us at the African Burial Ground. I had a lot of fun learning about my ancestors. I learned that the enslavers changed the enslaved Africans names. I also learned that while chained, women had babies. I hope to learn more about my ancestors. I will not judge people by the way they look but by their personality. I also hope to learn more about my ancestors so I can make a change in my way.

Raynita Vaughn,
The Bedford Village School, Bklyn., NY

Thank you for the tour. I enjoyed the art exhibits and all. They were all joyful, expressive, touching. I learned that

enslaved African-Americans were packed shoulder to shoulder. Another fact that I learned was that enslaved Africans jumped off the boat because they thought committing suicide was better than living a tragic life. I hope to achieve a special day to celebrate how our ancestors fought for us to have a better life. In honor of that day we will have a walk to the place where they were buried.

Amanda Boyce,
The Bedford Village School, Bklyn., NY

I really enjoyed our trip to the African Burial Ground, and I want to thank you for the tour. I was especially fond of the video we saw. I learned so much from it. I know the Africans, our ancestors were treated harshly, but I didn't know they were squished together on slave ships. Women even gave birth while chained to the wall and floor of the slave ship. People were all on top of each other, and when some died, their body would be on someone else. I know I surely wouldn't have survived in those times.

When I get older I'll become a psychologist and I'll find a cure for autism which affects a lot of African American children. That's how I'll try to honor the enslaved Africans.

Safriya Caste,
The Bedford Village School, Bklyn., NY

Keeping the Pressure On

As always I eagerly await each issue of Update, and this Winter 2000 Vol. 3 No. 1 is educational and newsworthy, as always. The article "The Status of Funding" is very newsworthy, because it shines light for those who "look but do not see," that whatever this government can do to hinder the Truth of our Story from being told, they will do.

And to the staff and students at Howard University, I admire you, because even though GSA showed the ugly head of this government[by not providing the proposed funding] 80% of a tough job is complete. Now only if the Brothers and Sisters at large used that same kind of dedication to put more pressure on the GSA and write the Postmaster General about our Commemorative Stamp Series, we could make another step in honoring Our Ancestors, Our Past and Ourselves.

Brother Mosi O. Paki,
Youngstown, Ohio

[Ed. Note: See Howard University report in *Update*

**OPEI welcomes letters from our
readers but reserves the right to
edit for length and clarity**



African Burial Ground Update

Compiled by Janet Dees

□ Postmaster General's Response to Petition Drive

February 25, 2000

Dear Dr. Wilson,

Thank you for your recent letter and petition to Postmaster General William J. Henderson, expressing support for the issuance of a commemorative stamp honoring the African Burial Ground located in New York City, New York. The Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee has previously reviewed the nomination of the African Burial Ground, but it was not recommended for issuance. However, in light of continued interest in this subject, the nomination will again be placed before the Committee. They are responsible for reviewing stamp proposals and making subject and design recommendations to the Postmaster General.

New stamps are announced approximately six months prior to the year in which they will be issued. The Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee works two to three years in advance to meet stamp design and production requirements. They are currently working on the stamp program for 2002 and beyond. Each year, the Postal Service receives thousands of letters suggesting hundreds of different topics for new stamps. Since 1957, the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee has reviewed many worthy subjects and has recommended a limited number based on national interest, historical perspective, and other criteria. Enclosed for your review is information about the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee and the criteria used in the stamp subject selection process. We appreciate your interest in our stamp program.

Terrence W. McCaffrey,
Acting Mgr. Stamp Development

□ **Volunteer Training.** On April 29, 2000, OPEI held the second of three yearly volunteer training sessions. A total of 23 volunteers were trained on this day. Volunteers primarily help "get the word out" about the African Burial Ground, and OPEI events. They also work special events and provide administrative assistance to OPEI staff when needed. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Donna Harden-Cole, Volunteer Coordinator at the OPEI office. The next volunteer training will be held on Saturday, October 21, 2000.

□ **General Services Administration Public Update.** On April 15, 2000, the GSA held the second in a series of Public Updates, to keep the public informed about the status of the African Burial Ground Project. Ron Law, Associate Regional Administrator for the African Burial Ground Project represented the General Services Administration. Presentations were also made by Dr. Sherrill Wilson, Director of OPEI and Peggy King-Jorde, Project Executive for Memorialization. The main concern voiced by members of the community was the schedule for the reburial of the remains. Other concerns included the size of the space allocated in the lobby of 290 Broadway for the African Burial Ground Interpretive Center.



African Burial Ground Site Tour conducted by Public Educator Shaniqua Maxwell. Photo credit: E. Peters.

□ **Annual Youth Symposium** On Saturday, March 25, 2000, OPEI held its annual Youth Symposium. This event is held to educate and inform young people about the African Burial Ground and early African history in New York. Over 100 young people and their adult relatives and friends attended this year's symposium. The program included libation and honoring of the ancestors at the African Burial Ground site, as well as viewing the documentary film: *The African Burial Ground: An American Discovery*, African Burial Ground site tours and the announcement of the winners of the Student Writing Contest. The winning entries are featured in this issue of *Update*.

□ **World Igbo Congress Visits African Burial Ground** On Thursday, May 25, 2000, members of the World Igbo Congress visited the African Burial Ground to pay their respects and give tribute to the ancestors buried at the site. The World Igbo Congress is an organization that promotes Igbo culture and unity among Igbo in Nigeria and in the Diaspora.



ARE YOU ON OUR MAILING LIST?

Please submit your name and/or corrections to OPEI
6 World Trade Ctr., U.S. Custom House, Rm. 239,
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(212) 432-5707, Fax (212) 432-5920

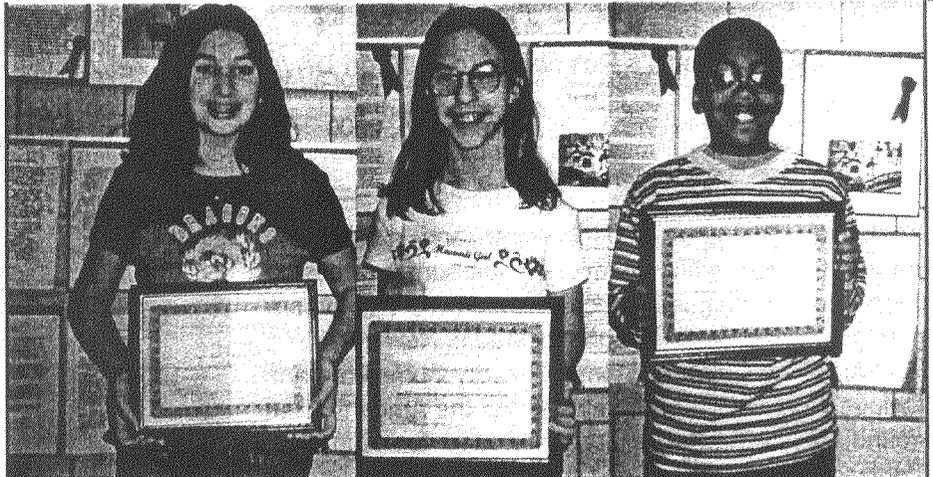
OPEI'S 3RD ANNUAL AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND WRITING COMPETITION WINNERS

SHORT STORY CATEGORY

**First Place
Middle School Winner:**

"My Slave Diary"

**By Kamau Morris
Northeast School
Montclair, NJ**



Middle School winners in the Short Story and Essay Categories from Northeast School, Montclair, N.J. l to r: Morgan Yascoe, Jennie Grayson and Kamau Morris
Photo credit: S.Cuevas

September 1, 1633

My name is Freebee, and I am a slave. I was separated from my wife and two children. They were sold to different "owners". Now my life is very bad. I work 24 hours a day, get about 1 minute of rest, and a small portion of food. I am whipped until I bleed. I suffer through hard times. When I was starving my owner was forced to feed me because I was getting weaker, and weaker as days went by. I work by carrying really heavy loads, and work in the fields. The time that we slaves can take a major rest is when the weather is really bad, but we do work in the rain, snow, and sleet. Nearly 10 of my owner's slaves died and there are only 8 left.

March 21, 1639

Many years have passed by, and now there are only 4 of us slaves. Most of the slaves died of dehydration or a really bad illness. Lots of children died. I am lucky I survived. The only time I got sick is when I had a slight cold, but I still worked to get my freedom. I got whipped

many times, as many as 90.

Sometimes you have to face the consequences. My friend, Joe-Joe tried to escape but they caught him. He was severely punished then killed. I cried so much I did not want to stop, but I have to move on and continue my fight for freedom.

December 21, 1640

After seven years of hard work and bad labor I am finally free, but right now I am really sick. I have a really bad illness called pneumonia. My life is now coming to an end, but I am so happy! I have completed my duties and now I am free, free as a bird! That is what Freebee means. I am very weak and sick, but when I die, I will be buried in a burial ground, a special place for Africans. It is called the African Burial Ground. Somehow in the future people will find our bodies to see what our history was like.

I am Freebee, and the great spirit is in me, and with me.



**Second Place
Middle School Winner:**

"The Secret Diary of Priscilla"

**By Jennie Grayson
Northeast School
Montclair, N.J.**

1, July 1774-

I am Priscilla. My grandmother was enslaved and taken out of Africa, our homeland, to New York City, where I am now. She took a very precious object from Africa, a cowrie shell. Grandmother gave it to Mama who gave it to me. She is buried under a Sankofa in our burial ground.

Mama has given birth nine times, three died, but all the other children besides me were sold away. Master John raped Mama twice, giving her two children who were both sold. I still have a fear of being sold away, but I doubt that will happen. Anyway, Master John uses his whip on rare occasions, unlike most white folk, like Master James. Mary, an enslaved girl my age working for

ESSAY CATEGORY

First Place Elementary School Winner:

Harriet Tubman : "From Slavery to Freedom"

By Tanisha Garcia
MS 75 X, Bronx, NY

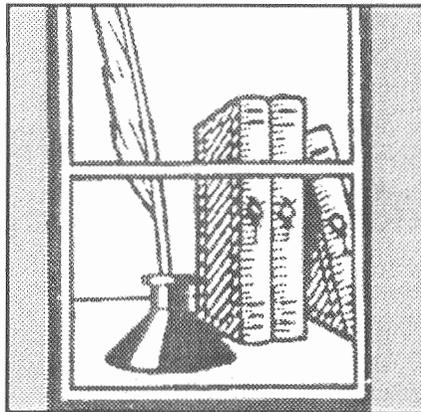
My name is Harriet Tubman, and this is the story of my travel from slavery to freedom. I was born into slavery in 1821 in Maryland. But today I am a free woman with great deeds behind me. I am known by many names. One of my names is General Tubman. But among the slaves I'm known as Moses the Deliverer. I did not receive any book learning. I never attended school. But I was able to travel from slavery to freedom.

My maiden name was Araminta Ross. I am the granddaughter of Africans. I am not mixed with white blood. My parents were slaves. They were married and faithful to one another. Our family was very strong. I was freed by the written will of my first master. But his wishes were not carried into effect. I was usually hired out to work. After I worked, the people would pay my owner for my services. I had to plow the field, plant the whole field and cart heavy crates. My bones showed that I had been lifting these heavy crates.

In the morning, I was a whipped girl. And in the afternoon, I took off my extra clothing because I knew that I wasn't going to get hit. I always stayed at the top of the landing and prayed to God to make me strong

and able to fight. My prayers were fully answered.

In my years, I received a severe blow to the head from a heavy weight. This iron weight was thrown at another slave, but it hit me instead. This weight had been used to measure pounds of flour and sugar. The slaver was angry. When he threw that weight it hit me instead of hitting the African slave. Until this day I have a disease of the brain and it makes me sluggish and causes me to dose off from time to time.



In 1844, I married John Tubman. I learned that my master was getting ready to sell me. I decided to escape. My brothers didn't agree with my plan. My plan was to follow the stream which was going North. I wanted to tell everyone goodbye. So I went through the streets singing a hymn, "Goodbye, I'm going to leave you. Goodbye, I'll meet you in the kingdom." I was leaving home, my husband, ma and pa, and brothers. I left penniless and followed the river flowing North.

Finally, after my long journey, I reached Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It took me two years to save all my money. Then I went back to Maryland for my husband. But my

husband was a faithless man. He had taken himself another wife. I didn't dare seek vengeance in his presence. I let him know where I was staying. But he declined to come with me. I became very angry. But I thought to myself, if I confront my husband, I will be caught, so I decided that I could do without him because he could do without me. I just dropped him out of my heart. And then all of my personal aims died. My new motto had become, "I can die only but once."

I returned to my old neighborhood nineteen times. Each time I went, the danger increased. A reward was offered for my capture. In 1857 I got my parents and brought them to freedom. I made my last trip in 1860. I took a baby with me.

Yes, they call me Harriet Tubman. And this is my story of my journey from slavery to freedom. I was a conductor on the Underground Railroad and never lost a passenger because if any man gave out he would be shot. Yes I am Harriet Tubman, General Tubman, and Moses the Deliverer. And I am free!



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Slave Testimony, Newspaper and Magazine Interviews 1864-1938.

Conrad Tubman Collection, Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library.

Sarah Bradford. Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman (Auburn, NY 1869).

"The Charles P. Wood. Manuscript of Harriet Tubman," Negro History Bulletin XIII, January 1950 pp 94-95.



**ESSAY CATEGORY
(Cont.)**

**Second Place Winner
Elementary School Category:**

**"The African Burial Ground"
By Morgan Yascoe
Northeast School,
Montclair, NJ**

Enslaved people worked very hard under tough circumstances. They worked for no pay, were forced to have children, and killed for no reason. I was shocked when I heard about slavery and thought how and why did slavery occur? Shouldn't all people be treated equally and not be judged by the color of their skin? Well, that was not the case for enslaved people, they were treated like animals.

The African Burial Ground is full of men and women. The burial ground is mostly filled of children slaves under the age of twelve. Most children died at child birth. Since this happened, a lot of mothers died. The health conditions for enslaved Africans were terrible.

This burial ground is not only full of bodies, it's filled with people who had hopes and dreams of freedom. Their families continued to live and are hopefully carrying out their dreams. It is great that people are going to build a museum over the burial ground, so that we can always remember the enslaved people and pay them our respect. For no one should be tortured by the unfair rules of slavery.

Time has changed so much in the last two centuries. A big thing that

has changed is slavery. Now a lot of people around the world are trying to stop slavery. The fact that now we in America can live without slavery is fantastic.

**POETRY
CATEGORY**



**First Place
College Winner:
Sherrie Jacobs
Baruch College
New York, NY**

Photo credit:
Martia Goodson

"O' Ancestors"

I guess I will never know what it must have been like.
all I can do now is imagine
do you feel me when I tread
on you everyday.
be it your physical, intellectual,
or spiritual walkway?
oh, what you have endured for me
to be here.

and if that is not true love, then
I'll never know what is.
for amid the brutality and
degradation, you loved me
enough to plant your seeds to
create a future generation;
a generation that has forgotten you,
rebukes you and tries to be
everything but you.

but forgive us ancestors,
for we know not what we do.
you know it's not our fault.
we'll always be a slave in
their minds.

they done put them shackles
on our brains, as soon as
they took dem off
yals feet.

but don't fret.
the shackles are falling
one by one,
for in spirit we know that you
fertilized your seeds with
knowledge, wisdom, and
understanding
watered them with hope and
freedom and Sankofa was
the sun.

POETRY CATEGORY
(Continued)

Middle School Winners

First Place Winner:
"Slavery"

By Michelle Cuevas
MS 75, Bronx, NY



Michelle Cuevas



Tanisha Garcia



Joanna Heureaux

1600s	Slavery.
1700s	Whites killing
1800s	Africans
Slavery	For running
Cruel slavery	away.
Really bad	1900
slavery	Beating of Africans
Why?	Selling of Africans
	Hanging of
Murdering of	Africans
Africans	Murdering of
Killing of Africans	Africans
Hanging of	And Martin Luther
Africans	King Jr.
Selling of Africans	It makes me cry
Beating of Africans	To think about
So bad	2000.
	◆*◆
It makes me cry	
To think about	

Second Place
Middle School Winner:
"Condemned"

By Johanna Heureaux
MS 75, Bronx, NY

Slavery is not	the person
here today	In chains
But if you stand	In prison
In a crowd	Or crying
You may find	Help...
Someone condemned	You know
Closed	Someone is
In a prison	condemned
Locked away in chains	Closed
Rattling chains	In a prison
Rattling and rattling	Locked away in chains
"Mercy!"	Rattling chains
They would say.	Rattling and rattling
"Mercy!"	Cries, "Mercy!, Help!"
Even if you	Mercy!
don't see	◆*◆

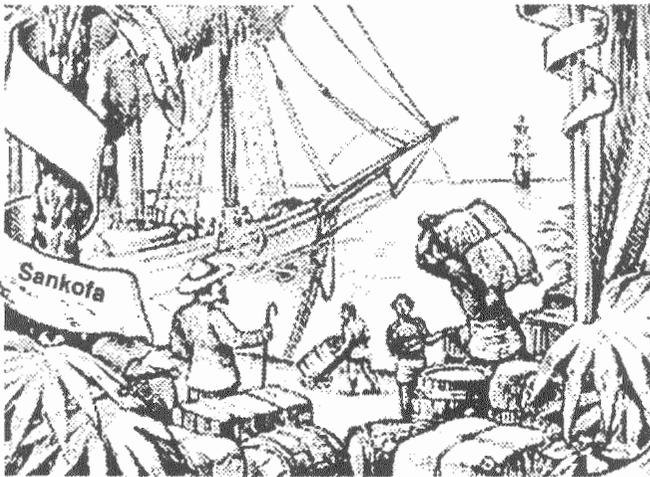


Photo credit: P. Murray

The Secret Diary of Priscilla
Cont. from page 4

Master James is scared to even say, "Yes, Master," for fear of his whip. Mama, Papa and I are the only Africans working for Master John and his family. My father is his blacksmith, and has burned himself twice. On these two occasions he was allowed a ten minute break to get his hand under water and then he had to go back to work. This was an extreme act of kindness. Most masters would have beaten him.

Mama is Mistress Anne's personal servant, running errands, fanning her, cooking for her and dressing her. I am the servant of the master's children, Elizabeth and Jonathan. They are obnoxious and treat me badly.

Even though they treat me this way, I in a way enjoy this job. I fan them when they have lessons with their tutor. When Elizabeth was seven, Jonathan was six and I was eight, their tutor taught them how to read. I just fanned them, but I listened and learned. Every day I ran out and wrote in the dirt what I had learned (letters, numbers, spelling, etc.) I know the answers to every question the tutor asks. However, if I am caught I will get skinned alive!

Now to my advantage, two years later, Elizabeth is going to a tea school (where she learns manners, fancy sewing and embroidery, etc.) She was using her old paper as a journal, until today when Mistress Anne scolded her. "Young ladies

have little need for reading, let alone journals. You have wasted all this time when you could have been practicing your embroidery." When Mistress Anne read Elizabeth's journal she was horrified. It had lots of things against her school, her parents, her life and her brother. Mistress Anne punished Elizabeth. I am only to work for Jonathan for a fortnight. I am not to obey anything Elizabeth says, nor will my parents. Now I only have one snob to deal with for an entire fortnight! It was quite fun to see the snob so angry. I had to run outside to laugh.

Best of all, Elizabeth's journal was given to me "to doodle on with whatever." So later I went outside to make ink out of blackberries, found a goose feather and put them in an iron jar Papa made me. While I was out there I overheard some men talking about a Cholera epidemic that a quarter of New York has. I really hope that I will not get it too. People are dying right and left (Last year I had Scarlet Fever. It is a wonder I survived. Mama took care of me, and somehow kept me going.)

The men also talked about breaking away from England and freedom for everyone. Does that include us too? I hope so, for freedom is my biggest dream, and yet, I do not even know what freedom is like. I was born here and will probably spend my life here.

I was wondering where to hide my diary, and I have decided. In

our little room in the attic, we each have separate palettes. They have many holes that are very big. I will hide my diary, quill, and ink in one of them and put some rags over it. I hope that will work.

Mama and Papa are very worried that I know how to read and write, and yet are proud. Oh yes! Mama was downstairs serving dinner and promised to bring the leftovers up here. Now Mama is back up with corn and lamb that actually fill us up as opposed to our gruel for breakfast. It is very late.

I hope to have time to write tomorrow, but I may be kept busy. I must put this diary away, for we are supposed to be up at five o'clock tomorrow morning. Good night.



Writing Competition Judges

- ◆ Emilyn Brown, Origins Ink ®
- ◆ Cynthia Copeland, N.Y. Historical Society
- ◆ Donna Harden Cole, African Burial Ground Project
- ◆ Dr. Martia Goodson, Baruch College, CUNY
- ◆ Ayo Harrington, Friends of the African Burial Ground
- ◆ Peggy King Jorde, African Burial Ground Project
- ◆ Phyllis Murray, M.S. 75, Bronx
- ◆ Dr. Sherrill D. Wilson, African Burial Ground Project

AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND PROJECT VOLUNTEER

Eugene Alexander Peters

By Donna Harden-Cole

Eugene Alexander Peters, also known as Gene, hails from Queens, New York and was educated in the New York City Public School System as a youngster. He went on to attend Buffalo State University where he obtained an undergraduate degree in criminal justice with a minor in African American studies. Gene continued his education on the graduate level at Buffalo State and holds a masters degree in student personnel administration. He has also done some post-master degree work in the field of sociology at SUNY Stony Brook. He is currently employed as the Assistant Director of the Education Opportunity Program at the State University of New York (SUNY) Farmingdale. Gene has also worked in the corporate arena in the field of insurance. He is also a former probation officer and formerly associated with the New York Urban League, where he developed programs for youth.

When asked why he was interested in becoming a volunteer for the African Burial Ground Project, Gene referred to the many times he followed the news reports on the rediscovery of the historic landmark. Coupled with the outstanding public outcry, especially with regards to reports about how the remains were being mishandled, Gene's interest was peaked. Upon further scrutiny, he found it disheartening that the leadership at the time appeared to be disinterested in the importance of investigating the recovery of the remains or what this could mean to the public at large.



Gene Peters pictured with some of the memorabilia from his collection. Photo courtesy of Gene Peters.

The news about the GSA establishing the Office of Public Education and Interpretation (OPEI) became a beacon of hope for Gene. When he heard about the volunteer program at OPEI, he believed this would be a great opportunity to become more involved with the Project and to better himself as a person. He added that this association would only embellish his own knowledge on the subject of enslaved Africans in America. Gene has conducted a good amount of research in this field. With the creation of his educational company "Prism", he has been able to collect various artifacts from the 17th and 18th centuries regarding such items as manumission and freedom papers, shackles, neck restraints, wills, auction documents and runaway advertisements.

Gene has volunteered on various levels at the many OPEI events since becoming a volunteer in 1996. He has assisted with the setup/clean up for events, materials distribution, acted as a building guide for visitors, as well as a photographer. He wants to encourage anyone who is looking for a volunteer opportunity to come and join the volunteers at the

OPEI. Gene says he finds it very rewarding to be able to be a part of an organization which allows him to give something back to the community. For example, in this capacity he also gets an opportunity to share his knowledge on African American history with his students at the university. When Gene does historic lectures and exhibits the artifacts in his collection, he makes sure to distribute materials on the African Burial Ground as well.

Gene would like to see OPEI continue with its efforts of making this historic information available to everyone. He wants this to happen not only on a local or community level but nationally and internationally as well. He points out that all people can benefit from the research that is being conducted on the recovery of the African Burial Ground in New York City. He believes that the historic information generated from the Project can act as a flagship for other states and regions to initiate their own research.

Gene has certainly been an asset to OPEI. He is the kind of volunteer any organization would hope to attract. The OPEI applauds Gene in his volunteer efforts and wishes him all the best in his many worthwhile endeavors.



(Gene is available to do historic presentations as well as exhibit the artifacts in his collection. Please call him at Prism Educational Resources at 631-842-9549.)

Some of the artifacts from Mr. Peters collection are included in the exhibition Lest We Forget: The Triumph Over Slavery, on view at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture from June 3- December 2000.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF 18TH CENTURY AFRICAN NEW YORKERS

Sherrill D. Wilson, Ph.D.

(Part 2 of 5)

New York Chronicle
December 21, 1792

To Be Sold

At Private Sale A healthy negro Wench About Thirteen Years of Age. She has had SMALL POX AND MEASLES. Is very strong and handy about any sort of House Work—

for particulars enquire of the printers

New York Journal
December 5, 1792

For Sale

A Country Negro Wench About 23 years of age With her eight month old child. She is to be sold for want of employ only.

Enquire at the office.

N.Y. Journal & Patriotic Register
November 30, 1792

Wanted to Purchase

A Negro Girl between the age of 10 and 14 years (one from the country would be preferred) they must be well recommended for honesty, sobriety, and particularly a good temper and disposition, without none need apply. Any person having such a one for sale, will hear of a purchaser by applying to the printer.

The bustling economy in human cargo in New York City created an urban enslaved population that was second only to Charleston South Carolina during the 18th century.



The buying and selling of African men, women, and children were documented daily in New York newspapers. Typical advertisements solicit buyers for healthy, strong men and women to perform on a life time basis a variety of domestic and trade related tasks. Age, health status, occupational skills and disposition of the enslaved are typically indicated as selling points to potential purchasers.

Glimpses of the lives of the enslaved are often to be found in advertisements, although the names of the enslaved are never mentioned. Fractured families were common in the slaveholding New York economy, despite the fact that most slaveholders held only one to two enslaved persons per household. Purchasers often viewed married slaves as unacceptable.

The July 25, 1798 issue of the *Daily Advertiser* posted a notice of a purchaser unwilling to buy married enslaved persons. Seldom did slaveholders selling enslaved persons show any concern for the welfare of their slaves or their family members (White:1991, 91).

Women and their babies were jointly advertised as potential property. Although throughout the North women with young children were viewed as limited in their ability to devote themselves solely to the tasks set forth by their masters.

Young enslaved women outnumbered men during the 18th century, and were common commodities in the New York marketplace. Advertisements appear in New York newspapers for girls as young as ten.

Advertisements also appeared as "Wanted and Wanted To Purchase" indicating a market and perhaps a preference for the talents and skills of the young. Advertisements for the sale of men and young boys characterize them as healthy and enumerate their occupational skills. Personal appearance is not mentioned beyond the scope of health, implying that the purchaser's investment in a lifetime employee or servant will yield the promised gains.

Editors of the *Journal of Negro History* customarily highlighted original documents pertaining to African enslavement. Advertisements for enslaved persons were often a subject of analysis during the early 20th century. In 1916 they wrote:

"...masters in offering slaves for sale and advertising fugitives unconsciously spoke of their virtues as well as their shortcomings, that the public might be fully



informed as to the character of these blacks. Through these advertisements, therefore, we can get at the very life of the Negro when slavery was still of the patriarchal sort and thus contrast his then favorable condition with the wretchedness of the institution after it assumed its economic aspect in the nineteenth century."

In part three of this five-part article, the author will examine runaway advertisements. Part four will focus on 18th century New York slave narratives and other publications. Part five will conclude with an examination of broadsides. All advertisements appear as originally published in New York newspapers with no changes in spelling or grammar. For a complete listing of newspaper sources, see part 1, *Update*, Volume 2, Issue no. 12.



**New York Daily Advertiser
January 5, 1792**

FOR SALE

A Family of negroes, consisting of a negro wench, about 35, and her male child of one year, a negro girl of about 12 or 14 years, a negro man aged about 60 who is an excellent coachman, a good farmer, and a good grist miller, one other negro man, about 30 years old, who is brought up to farming and under stands washing, baking, plain cooking and house cleaning, &c....



Drawing by L. Kaneem Smith

**New York Daily Advertiser
January 5, 1792**

FOR SALE

A BLACK BOY, stout, healthy and capable of family work, attending tables, cleaning knives and performing very well such domestic matters as are required of young lads in town and country, he can milk cows and is very useful on a farm.

ALSO

A Valuable Black man, capable of any kind of Employ in town or country, intelligent sober and honest, few are more complete farm negroes than himself, he has also proved very capable in assisting at masonry work in this city and can also ably supply most branches of service.

**New York Packet
Wednesday, January 2, 1787**

TO BE SOLD

A Negro man, aged 35 years; he has worked three years at the tanning business and may suit a country tanner. He is a sound hearty negro, and will be sold cheap. Enquire of the Printers.



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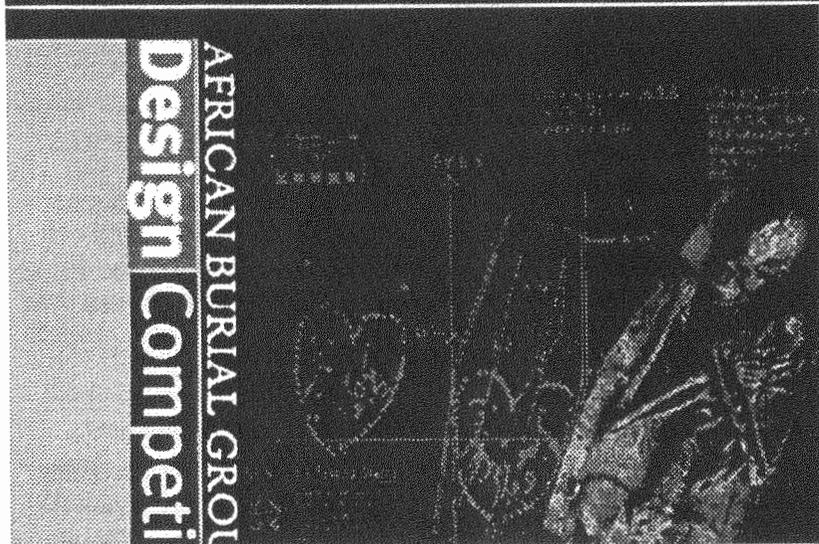
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Memorialization Update:
From the Office of Project Executive Peggy King Jorde



**MEMORIALIZATION OFFICE HOSTS
SPECIAL PILGRIMAGE TO SITE**

In April, the Office of Memorialization recognized the civil rights activist and former expatriate, Dr. Preston T. King, when he joined others in a recent pilgrimage honoring the ancestors at the National Historic Landmark African Burial Ground. The occasion was marked by a moving libation ceremony that was officiated by the Interfaith Subcommittee for Reinterment chair, Dorothy Desir Davis, who was accompanied by her entourage, Le Peristyle. Also in attendance were renowned vocalist, Odetta, former Federal steering committee members Miriam Francis and J. Max Bond with Mrs. Jean Bond, spouse of the late civil rights attorney Mrs. C.B. King, Ms. Lottie Malone (long time project supporter) and members of the general public.

The ceremony was held in the rotunda of the federal office building at 290 Broadway. Our special thanks to OPEI for providing a presentation and tours of the site.

Last year, the Office of Memorialization hosted a visit by a distinguished member of the British Parliament. Dr. King, a native of Albany, Georgia is an author, professor and political theorist at Lancaster University in England, who was highly chronicled in the media in February when he accepted an unconditional pardon by President Clinton ending a 39 year exile. In an act of civil disobedience in 1961, Dr. King declined reporting for military induction after the local draft board ignored his request to accord him the title of "Mr." in official correspondences as was the custom for white inductees. King was tried and convicted, but refused to serve an 18 month sentence in a Georgia federal prison and fled the country.

Among efforts to effect Dr. King's return was a letter to President Clinton from the federal court judge that presided over King's case. In his letter, the judge now 91 and retired, urged

the issuance of a pardon and acknowledged the premise for Dr. King's resistance was not unlike that demonstrated by Ms. Rosa Parks.

AWARD TO DESIGN INTERPRETIVE CENTER. The African Burial Ground Interpretive Center contract was awarded in March to a New York based design collaborative recognized as IDI Construction. The Interpretive Center will be accessed through the lobby of the federal building at 290 Broadway and will relate the history of the site. We are eager for you to meet this dynamic group and urge the community to "listen out" for those opportunities when the team will share their vision as a part of realizing the final design for the Interpretive Center. Our congratulations to IDI Construction! Times and dates for related events will be provided through our office info line.

LORENZO PACE SCULPTURE TO BE DEDICATED. Artist Lorenzo Pace is expected to have an unveiling of his sculpture, Triumph of the Human Spirit, in late Spring in Foley Square Park, located within the African Burial Ground and Commons Historic District. Details for the unveiling date and program will also be available through our information line: 212-264-6949. *Let us know if you or your organization would like to partner in our Memorialization efforts. For events and other information please contact us at:

The African Burial Ground Project,
Office of Memorialization
26 Federal Plaza, Suite 1606
New York NY 10278
(212) 264-6949 (Tel)
(212) 264-4082 (Fax)



GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

Ronald Law
Associate Regional Administrator
African Burial Ground Project

The General Services Administration announced the selection of IDI Construction Company Inc. as the winning firm to design, fabricate and construct the Interpretive Center for the African Burial Ground Project. IDI Construction Company of Manhattan was selected in consultation with a distinguished panel of African American historians and exhibit designers, following an extensive public participation process that produced five finalists. The selection of IDI Construction Company brings the African Burial Ground Project one step closer to honoring and recognizing the lives and contributions of the African ancestors who lived and died in this city.

The Interpretive Center will be a modern, state-of-the art facility recalling the lives of the 18th Century Africans who were buried in Lower Manhattan. Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY) attended the press conference announcing this selection. The 2,000 square foot Interpretive Center will be located within the Federal Office Building at 290 Broadway. GSA received a wide variety of submissions in response to its request for proposals.

The IDI team is made up of a multidisciplinary group of professionals who are recognized experts in their respective fields. The architect and designers include Jacqueline Hamilton, RA, Paula Griffith, RA,

Atim Annette Oton and Jasper Whyte. The office of Hardy and Associates will provide engineering. The researchers include Dr. A.J. Williams-Myers, a historian at SUNY New Paltz and Dr. Lee Baker, an anthropologist at Columbia University. The exhibition designer is Deirdre Scott, and Kinetic Media Inc. will provide multimedia and CAD services. Philip Bailey is the artist and Elizabeth Geary-Archer will provide marketing and Public Relation services for the project.

Trevor Prince, the Executive Vice President of IDI describes IDI's concept for the African Burial Ground Interpretive Center as a "journey symbolizing the physical movement and cultural dispersal defining the African Diaspora. It unfolds in four phases: birth, maturity, death, and rebirth, which are represented architecturally in four containers: orientation, studio, transformation, and reclamation. We are honored to be selected as the prime contractor for this unique project. We are aware of the importance of the Interpretive Center for the community and the role it will play. IDI and its team are committed to working with GSA in exploring various ways to accelerate both the design and construction schedule with the goal of producing a first class Interpretive Center."

The African Burial Ground Interpretive Center is one of the focal

points in the effort to honor the memory of some 408 colonial era human remains, uncovered during a construction project at 290 Broadway in 1991. Seven distinguished scientific, educational, and exhibit experts made individual recommendations to the agency. The experts are Dr. Michael L. Blakey of the Sociology and Anthropology Department of Howard University, Washington, DC, Dr. Howard Dodson, Chair, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City, Dr. Rex Marshall Ellis, Chair, Division of Cultural History, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Dr. T.J. Davis of the History Department at Arizona State University, Sylvia Harris, exhibit designer of Yale University, Ms. Faith Davis Ruffins of the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution and Gretchen Sullivan Sorin of the Graduate Program in History Museum Studies at SUNY Cooperstown.

The African Burial Ground Interpretive Center and the Exterior Memorial in New York City are part of the agency's memorialization of this National Historic Landmark. GSA has also commissioned six works of art, all referencing the African Burial Ground, for the Federal Office Building at 290 Broadway, adjacent to the African Burial Ground National Historic Site.



Project Overview

Overall the Project continues to move forward. The Office of Public Education & Interpretation (OPEI) continues to provide information on the African Burial Ground Project to more than 100,000 individuals and groups globally. In the New York City Metropolitan area, one of its primary means of disseminating the archaeological, scientific and historical findings of the Project is via public slide presentations. Both on site and off site presentations are provided, as off site presentations often allow OPEI to reach larger audiences than can be accommodated in OPEI's office. On average OPEI provides two presentations a day, year round. When presentations are scheduled for on site, groups generally receive an African Burial Ground site tour. Groups in previous years have had to schedule presentations 2-3 weeks in advance, in order to be accommodated. Today the average waiting period to schedule a slide presentation is 8 weeks and the waiting period for a group tour of the African Burial Ground Historic Site averages 5-6 weeks.

The procurement for the Memorialization is moving forward. GSA has accelerated its planning and timetable for completing this phase. The design competition for an Exterior Memorial involves an extensive public participation process, and outreach effort that crosses international boundaries, and consultation provided by a distinguished panel of experts. After a group of finalists are announced for the Exterior Memorial design competition, a public forum will be planned as well as an exhibit of those proposals.

Since January, Peggy King Jorde, Project Executive for GSA's Office of Memorialization, has been organizing and coordinating the activities of the reinterment committee. This group will coordinate a variety of important community based memorialization initiatives that will culminate in the final reinterment ceremony.

The research being conducted by Howard University is on hold pending GSA's obtaining further funding to complete the research. To date \$5.1 million has been spent on research and additional funding is needed to complete all the components of the African Burial Ground project. Specifically, due to new technologies and scientific protocols, some of the factors the research will focus on include:

1. DNA studies to reconstruct family lineages and cultural heritage for living African Americans to trace their ancestral ties to the site and to Africa.
2. Chemical studies to tell where each ABG person was born and where in Africa and the Caribbean they spent their early lifetimes.
3. Historical research on locations in the Caribbean and Africa that will provide information on what life was like in these locations prior to arrival in New York.
4. Data on dental growth defects can show changes in health and nutrition over the course of the life time of people buried in the cemetery.
5. CT Scans to provide three-dimensional images of bones and teeth, which can also be used to reconstruct the faces and some of the people buried in New York.

6. The creation of a comprehensive computer database that will make the hundreds of thousands of items of information about the site available to scholars and the public. The CAD simulation that is part of this database provides a three-dimensional map of the burials and artifacts, as well as a reconstruction of how the cemetery would have looked in the 1700's.



OPEI Mini-Calendar of Saturday Events *

Film Festival Sat., Jun. 17 2000	Volunteer Training Sat., Oct. 21, 2000
OPEI Open To the Public Sat., July 15, 2000	Fall Educators Symposium Sat., Nov. 18, 2000
Summer Educators Symposium Sat., Aug. 12, 2000	Kwanzaa Film Festival & Site Tour Sat., Dec. 30, 2000
Film Festival Sat., Sept. 16, 2000	

* Reservations are needed for all events. Events are subject to change or cancellation. Please call to confirm time and locations @ (212) 432-5707.

**DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS
OR COMMENTS ABOUT THE
AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND
PROJECT?**

PLEASE SEND E-MAIL TO:

nyabg@worldnet.att.net

OPEI'S SPRING 2000 READING LIST

Compiled by Sherrill D. Wilson,
Jean Cerasale and Abiodun
Harris



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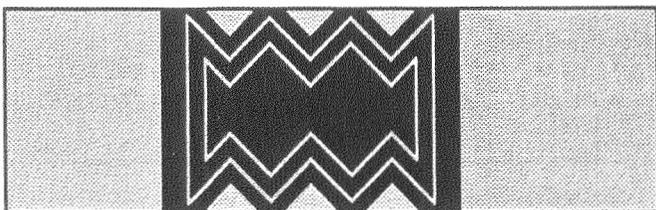
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IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF UPDATE:

- ▼ Media Representations
(Part 3 of 5)
- ▼ IDI Construction Project
- ▼ GSA Project Update



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ADDRESS

